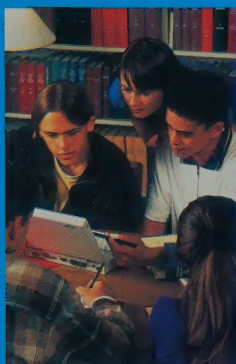
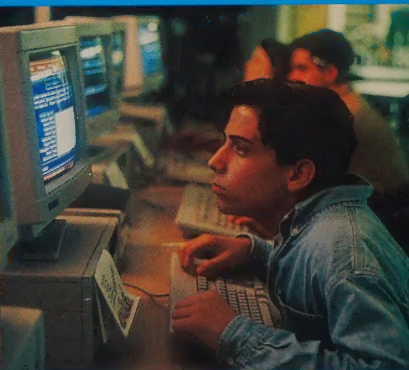


The Learning Age



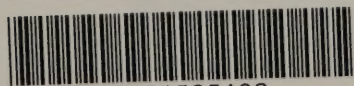
Higher Education for the **21ST** Century

Response to the Garrick Report

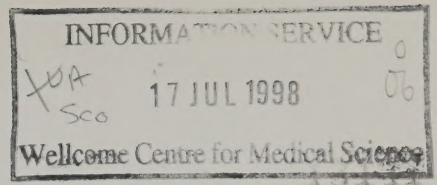


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Higher Education *for the* **21ST Century**

Response to the Garrick Report

CONTENTS

Ministerial Foreword	1
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Chapters

1	Introduction	3
2	The Core Business of Higher Education	6
3	Teaching, Quality and Standards	9
4	Supporting Research and Scholarships	10
5	Scottish Higher Education and The Scottish Economy	12
6	Organisational Infrastructure	13
7	Funding Higher Education in Scotland	16
8	Way Forward	17
9	The Government's Priorities for Higher Education in 1998-99	19
	Summary of Consultation Responses	21
	Responses Received by The Scottish Office on the Dearing and Garrick Reports	23

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

The heart of the Dearing Committee's vision of higher education is a compact between higher education and society which reflects their strong bond of mutual inter-dependence. The proposed compact has largely been lost in press discussion of the Dearing and Garrick Reports, which has tended to focus on the changes to student support. I want to take the opportunity of the Government's response to the Garrick Report to emphasise my personal commitment to the compact.

I agree with Sir Ron Garrick's Foreword to his Committee's Report. He said that his Committee had, as a first priority, reasserted "the need to ensure that the quality and output of the Scottish system would be comparable with the best in the world". That is also the Government's first priority for higher education in Scotland.

Excellence in higher education is at the root of Scotland's future economic success; is crucial to improving the society we live in; and offers major opportunities for personal growth and development. All facets can be illustrated by the way in which our universities and colleges contribute to and inform debates on a wide variety of issues facing Scottish society. Our aim is that higher education should both flourish during the Government's term in office and become more accessible to all sections of our society.

The Dearing Committee stressed that its proposals on funding were the main part of the compact which it expected the Government to meet. We have taken the difficult decision of introducing tuition fees for some students and moving to a system of maintenance based entirely on income contingent loans. Our proposals are a variation of one of the Dearing Committee's illustrations. The variation means that about 40% of Scottish students are unlikely to pay any tuition fees, with only the wealthiest quarter or so paying the full £1,000. Moreover, we have accepted the Committee's proposals for income contingent loans to improve the position faced by graduates in repaying their loans. In the longer term, our proposals will raise about an additional £140 million in Scotland. I believe that the additional funding will benefit further and higher education institutions.

In the short term, both our proposals and the others illustrated by the Dearing Committee will not raise much additional funding. However, for 1998-99, the Government has found an additional £17 million for the higher education sector in Scotland and an additional £8 million for the further education sector. It is a substantial increase in the face of pressures the Government face elsewhere on the Scottish block and a considerable improvement on the situation the Government inherited. I hope therefore that our commitment to the compact will be judged - at least in terms of funding - by the fact that we have increased funding in the short-term rather than wait until benefits from the new student support system accrue.

This document sets out the Government's response to all of the Garrick Committee's recommendations. It is being published in parallel with the response by the four Education

Departments to the Dearing Report. To those in Scotland, however, the Garrick Report provides the main framework for the future of higher education. Nevertheless, we in Scotland have a close interest in many of the main Dearing recommendations.


The Government already has well in hand work on qualifications and improving the 6th year in Scottish schools. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council have begun discussions with the new Quality Assurance Agency on piloting the new quality assurance process in Scotland. We also accept much of the Committee's proposals on research and that we should establish a Further Education Funding Council. Finally, I also accepted in October the Committee's recommendation concerning equity of tuition fees for Scottish qualified students taking longer courses in Scotland.

Taking forward the Committee's recommendations on qualifications and quality will require institutions to meet their side of the compact. I do not expect that to happen overnight. A number of the measures will require additional resources. Moreover, the commitment of staff in institutions - not just senior managers - will need to be secured if the Committee's proposals are to succeed.

The first changes will, of course, impact on students. Even though many students will not pay the full tuition fee themselves, I believe they will become more aware of the need to get added value from each year of their course. It will put pressure on institutions to demonstrate value and to be more flexible. As the Dearing Report suggests, there should be growing inter-dependence between institutions and students as they invest more directly in education.

I also believe that the compact should apply more widely between institutions and their local communities. The Dearing Committee endorses the concept of free-standing higher education institutions. However, the wider community - taxpayers - provide the largest source of income to these institutions. That means that their governing bodies should reflect that community, be inclusive and when necessary be accountable.

I am grateful to Sir Ron Garrick and his Committee for their work in producing such a comprehensive document in a comparatively short time. I look forward to working with the higher and further education sectors in implementing the agreed recommendations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Wilson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRIAN WILSON MP

Minister for Education and Industry

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the Government's response to the recommendations of the Scottish (Garrick) Committee of the National (Dearing) Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. It is being published in parallel with a UK response to the main National Inquiry Report and should be read in conjunction with that response. Although many of the Scottish Committee's recommendations stand in their own right, the Government's response should be viewed in terms of the overall response to the main Committee Report. The role of higher education within the Government's policies for lifelong learning will be dealt with in a Scottish Office paper later in the year.

The existence of the Scottish Committee stems from the important and distinctive nature of Scottish higher education. Higher education is an important area of Scottish life and one in which The Scottish Office invests about £1 billion annually. That investment is of a higher order than elsewhere in the United Kingdom because of both the higher funding per full-time student in Scotland and the higher proportion of young people who enter higher education in Scotland. The latest figures show that around 46% of young people were taking a higher education course in a higher education institution or at a college of further education. Moreover, we educate a large number of students from the rest of the UK and elsewhere in the European Union. Scotland imports students and export graduates.

It is therefore reassuring that the Dearing Committee has been complimentary to the Scottish system and has based a number of its recommendations on existing practice. For example, the Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SCOTCAT) is recommended as a model for the rest of the UK. We have also been successful in expanding higher education provision through sub-degree courses.

However, it would be wrong to be complacent. The challenges facing the Scottish sector are the same as elsewhere in the UK. Our institutions need to maintain and improve their teaching reputation to continue to attract the one-third or so of students in our higher education institutions who come from outside Scotland. They also need to continue to improve their research activities compared to the rest of the world. The Government is committed to working with the sector towards those ends and expects that the new Scottish Parliament will take a close interest in higher education when it takes over responsibility in 2000.

The Government's Vision for Higher Education

A vision for higher education in a learning society was set out in the main Dearing Committee Report. The Government shares that vision and has responded to it in parallel with this document. Of course, any vision of higher education in the future needs to take account of the distinctive nature of the Scottish educational system.

Taking account of Scottish factors, the Government's vision for higher education in Scotland is of:

- a sector which encourages and achieves equal access for everyone who has the potential to benefit from higher education regardless of the individual's social or economic background;
- a higher education sector that, through its teaching and research, supports the competitiveness of the Scottish economy and helps meet the needs of our society;
- a student support system that delivers promptly and efficiently an equitable means for students to support themselves;
- a higher education sector where institutions set and maintain high quality and standards and give students and employers the information they need to choose the programmes best suited to their needs;
- a sector that promotes lifelong learning, meeting the aspirations and needs of students and heeding the requirements of employers by offering various entry and exit points; and offers credit for students' relevant study, work and experience, so that they can stage their studies to meet their evolving needs across the years;
- institutions that place as high a value on good teaching as on research and who increasingly employ staff trained and accredited in teaching and learning;
- institutions that collaborate with each other and across sectoral boundaries to assist the furtherance of teaching and learning, and high quality research;
- institutions that continuously review their processes, use of facilities and teaching methodologies to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and the best value for money;
- institutions where governance is open, inclusive and accountable, and meets the high standards rightly demanded of all publicly funded bodies;
- a policy and funding framework that is able to take decisions at the interfaces with secondary and further education and employment to ensure consistency of access, funding, quality and standards.

Such a vision will, of course, require all of the stakeholders to the Dearing compact to play their part. Moreover, it is a vision that may evolve and change as democratic accountability for higher education is achieved through the new Scottish Parliament.

The following sections contain the Government's specific response to the 29 recommendations in the Report of the Scottish Committee. Some of the recommendations are fairly central to the above vision whereas others are fairly specific recommendations for changes in the machinery of government. The Government believes that its response to the specific recommendations are consistent with achieving that overall vision.

CHAPTER 2

2. THE CORE BUSINESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 *New Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*

Recommendation 1 - We recommend to providers of higher education programmes in Scotland, the Quality Assurance Agency, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access that they should together consider and adopt an integrated qualifications framework based around level of study and Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme credit points.

This is primarily a matter for the various bodies to take forward. However, the Government welcomes this recommendation and the opportunity to contribute towards its implementation. The framework will be built through agreement between those who provide, award and quality assure Scottish qualifications. It will provide a common language for describing the qualifications system with considerable potential to promote its coherence and assist learners to progress to their full potential. The Scottish Office will be fully involved in the process of building and maintaining the framework, ensuring that full account is taken of wider developments in education and training. Following discussion with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP), Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA), agreement has been reached about setting up an Advisory Group on a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which will take the initiative forward.

2.2 *Scottish Higher Education Qualifications/Bachelors Degrees*

Recommendation 2 - We recommend to all higher education institutions that 360 credit-point Bachelors degrees should become more widely available and that they should begin to develop or extend their provision in this area, with the support and assistance of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

The Government welcomes this recommendation although it is primarily a matter for the higher education institutions themselves. The Government has asked the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) to consult with institutions and ensure that its funding policies support educationally desirable change. The Government recognises, however, that the success of the

new qualification will depend on employers' support. The Scottish Office will look at the qualifications it specifies for its various schemes for direct entry and recruitment for single posts. Where appropriate it will define the minimum qualifications required in terms of a general degree so as to encourage applications from as wide a pool of talent as possible.

Recommendation 3 - We recommend to higher education institutions that they should develop wider and more diverse programmes at honours level.

The Government supports this recommendation although its implementation is essentially a matter for the higher education institutions themselves. Indeed, COSHEP states that many higher education institutions have been and are actively pursuing that course.

Recommendation 4 - We recommend to professional bodies and institutions that they should together formally consider how their requirements could be embedded within the qualifications framework, in discussion with the Quality Assurance Agency and the Scottish Qualifications Authority as appropriate.

The Government supports this recommendation. Many links already exist between professional bodies and higher education, often involving mutual recognition and SCOTCAT credit. Many professional bodies, eg in accounting and finance, such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, or in business administration, such as the Institute of Personnel and Development or the Chartered Institute of Marketing, accept a Scottish honours degree in a relevant subject as meeting either in full or in part the requirements for membership of the profession. These links must be maintained. The development of the qualifications framework should, however, also allow a strengthening of such links. The views of the Advisory Group on a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework will be sought on how to take this recommendation forward.

2.3 Admissions

Recommendation 5 - We recommend to the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals, the Association of Scottish Colleges, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access, The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, the Association of Directors of Education, school headteachers and other interested parties that they should give urgent attention and consideration to achieving better value for money from the Scottish Sixth Year by:

- evolving a meaningful and credit-rated curriculum for the Advanced Higher;
- evolving a meaningful curriculum for non-Advanced Higher students so that both can be fitted meaningfully and usefully into the framework of qualifications.

The Government welcomes this recommendation as offering strong support to the aims of the Higher Still programme. COSHEP has already made clear in public announcements that it will encourage institutions to assign credit to candidates for admission who have passes at the level of Advanced Higher. COSHEP believes that the extent of credit awarded will vary considerably from course to course. The Government is confident that a meaningful credit rating can be agreed. This will increase the motivation of students to make the most of the improvements to the Scottish sixth year brought about by Higher Still.

In relation to non Advanced Higher students, the fundamental aim of Higher Still is to encourage higher and broader achievement by all students. The Higher Still system will ensure that all students can undertake relevant subjects at the right level leading to nationally recognised qualifications. The courses are designed so that articulation between the new levels is strong and the modular structure allows for credit to be built up over time. The current consultation on Group Award proposes credit transfer from SVQs into Higher Still. The structure of Higher Still will, therefore, closely align with the principles of the Scottish qualifications framework.

Recommendation 6 - We recommend to higher education providers that they should clearly specify their requirements for combinations of A levels which will lead to entry with advanced standing within the new qualifications framework.

The Government welcomes this recommendation. Although it is for individual higher education providers to consider, the Government believes they should give more consideration for entry into second year for candidates with appropriate combinations of A levels. Indeed it has long been the practice of some faculties in some institutions to offer direct entry to appropriate candidates. The previous recommendation deals in part with the Advanced Higher which will offer an equivalent level of challenge to students. The Government expects that, in due course, similar advanced standing will also be given for equivalent groupings of Advanced Highers.

2.4 Further Education Route

Recommendation 7 - We recommend to further education colleges and higher education institutions that they should actively collaborate to enhance and publicise access and articulation routes into degree programmes for students at further education colleges.

The Government welcomes this recommendation which is for the FE colleges and HE institutions to take forward. It also acknowledges the important role that FE colleges and the SWAP consortia have played in widening access to higher education and encourages colleges and HE institutions to build on existing partnership and collaborative arrangements.

CHAPTER 3

3. TEACHING, QUALITY AND STANDARDS

3.1 *Learning and Teaching*

Recommendation 8 - We recommend to higher education institutions that they should, on behalf of their staff, establish or seek access to programmes accredited by the proposed Institute for Learning and Teaching that support teaching excellence. Institutions should encourage new and existing staff, including higher education teachers in the further education sector, to join the Institute.

The Government supports the Committee's recommendation. Teachers will have to respond to an increasingly discerning student population. The growth in information technology will open up new ways of learning and teaching and teachers will be increasingly involved in learning partnerships with major employers. The Government acknowledges the fact that the proposed Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education will be a body funded and regulated by the subscription of its members. It is, however, primarily a matter for the higher education institutions to take forward.

3.2 *Quality and Standards*

Recommendation 9 - We recommend to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council that for as long as Teaching Quality Assessment remains the main quality assessment mechanism in operation in Scotland, a review cycle of not more than six years should be in place.

SHEFC has informed Ministers that its programme of teaching quality assessment will cease following the end of its first cycle at the end of academic year 1997-98.

Recommendation 10 - We recommend to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency that they should meet, as soon as practical, to begin negotiations that will ensure that the criteria to support Scotland's inclusion in the Agency are met at an early date.

The Government welcomes the advice it has received from SHEFC that it has entered into discussions with the new QAA about development of trials for the new quality assurance system in Scotland.

CHAPTER 4

4. SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIPS

4.1 *Collaboration*

Recommendation 11 - We recommend to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council that it should identify how it might encourage and facilitate research collaboration within its funding streams.

Recommendation 12 - We recommend to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council that it should give further consideration to how, and on what basis, collaborative research centres might be best facilitated and organised in Scotland.

Recommendation 13 - We recommend to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and the Research Councils that they should, as appropriate, make available additional funding to ensure that outstanding researchers, irrespective of location, have access to research facilities.

The Government welcomes these recommendations. It believes that SHEFC already seeks to encourage research collaboration amongst higher education institutions and between those institutions and other bodies. Its guidance to SHEFC for 1998-99 asked them to consider targeting some research development funding at those institutions in Scotland which have had only limited opportunities to create centres of research strength and which can demonstrate viable, well developed research proposals. It asked SHEFC to do so in terms of encouraging specific research groups. SHEFC also seeks to further encourage collaboration by, for example, promoting access by researchers to facilities outside their own institution. SHEFC has been asked to address, with the higher education sector, any barriers that currently prevent such co-operation.

4.2 *Employer Partnerships*

Recommendation 14 - We recommend to higher education institutions that they should identify and establish links with industry to foster and facilitate work-based research training. These links should enable industry staff to gain high quality postgraduate qualifications through in-house research projects.

The Government attaches great importance to this recommendation and looks forward to seeing the progress institutions can make. It believes that the Teaching Company Scheme and the recently launched Faraday Partnership programme are good examples of such links.

4.3 Chief Scientific Adviser

Recommendation 15 - We recommend that the Secretary of State for Scotland should consider filling the post of Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland. One of his or her primary responsibilities would be to identify and develop, where possible, from the diverse research base in Scotland, an integrated strategy for Scottish research.

The Government agrees that it would be beneficial to develop a more integrated strategy for Scottish research. As well as fostering excellence this would help in securing better value for money and in underpinning Scotland's industrial development. However, the Government does not believe that filling the post of Chief Scientist would be the best way of meeting this aim. It will consider further how the strategy could successfully be developed.

The Government also believes that it is important to develop Scottish science in the context of UK and international science. One of its strategies for doing so - the Foresight programme - is being tailored to the Scottish science base through collaboration between The Scottish Office, SHEFC, Scottish Enterprise (SE), COSHEP, the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) and CBI Scotland, and the activities of other individuals and organisations. Scotland has the added advantage of the joint SE/RSE initiative, *Technology Ventures*. Both influence the research undertaken in Scotland, and the choice of how best to reap associated commercial benefits.

CHAPTER 5

5. SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SCOTTISH ECONOMY

Recommendation 16 - We recommend that the Confederation of British Industry (Scotland), the Scottish Council Development and Industry and other employer associations should urge their members to give consideration to increasing provision of sponsorship opportunities and work experience for students.

Recommendation 17 - We recommend to higher education providers and employers that they should collaborate to develop more sponsorship and work experience opportunities which provide real benefit to both students and employers.

Recommendation 18 - We recommend to The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department that it should look in detail at the scope for developing additional work placement opportunities on the Shell Technology Enterprise Programme model using funds already channelled for support of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

The Government considers sponsorship and work experience for students to be a very useful way to encourage collaboration and interchange between industry and academia. It is convinced of the benefits to higher education providers, employers and the students themselves. Public funds are already used in a variety of ways and the Government would welcome increased involvement from both industry and academia in promoting this type of exchange. The Government is already a major sponsor of the Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP) through DTI which supports the Programme on a UK wide basis. The Scottish Office also helps to promote and support the Programme through provision of facilities for Programme launches. The Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) also run placement schemes. The Government reviews on a regular basis the economy and effectiveness of the programmes it supports and will seek to ensure that lessons are learned from best practice. It may be difficult to expand STEP within its current format but the Government will look at the evaluation and consider what scope there may be. However, no commitment can be given on changes to funding structures until the results of The Scottish Office comprehensive spending review become available.

CHAPTER 6

6. ORGANISATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

6.1 Governance

Recommendation 19 - We recommend to the Confederation of British Industry (Scotland), Chairmen and Chief Executives of Scottish companies and other organisations that they should be responsive to institutional needs for high quality lay members for their governing bodies.

Although this recommendation is aimed at industry, it also impacts on higher education institutions. Although higher education institutions are autonomous bodies, they receive the bulk of their funding from the public purse. The Government therefore believes that they should be inclusive in the membership of their governing bodies by drawing high quality governors from all relevant backgrounds, in addition to those drawn from staff and students.

6.2 Rectors

Recommendation 20 - We recommend to the four Scottish ancient universities and to the Government that the office of Rector should no longer be linked to the Chairmanship of the University Court, and that the appropriate legislation should be enacted to support this change in institutional governance.

The Government has announced that it does not intend to legislate to support the proposed change in institutional governance. It believes that the position of Rectors as Chairmen of Courts of the Ancient Universities provides an important safeguard for staff and students. It acknowledges, however, that those electing a Rector have a responsibility to ensure that candidates are fit and proper persons for such an important role.

6.3 Management of Individual Institutions

Recommendation 21 - We recommend to institutions that they should develop ideas for improvement in performance through better use of facilities and resources, and that this should be implemented both within and between institutions. Staff who contribute useful ideas should be rewarded.

Recommendation 22 - We recommend to institutions that they should develop a culture where each individual member of staff is aligned to the need to assist the organisation in becoming as efficient and effective as possible.

The Government welcomes the fact that COSHEP has supported both recommendations and hopes that individual institutions will take them forward. It believes that the culture of co-operation and participation requires to be actively encouraged and that SHEFC should take account of that in framing and implementing their policies. This should include SHEFC encouraging institutions to seek Investors in People status as The Scottish Office will do in relation to FE colleges.

6.4 *The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Councils*

Recommendation 23 - We recommend to the Government that the appropriate legislation should be enacted or invoked to establish two separate funding councils - one for further education and one for higher education - each with a separate chairman but under a single organisation and with a single chief executive.

The Government accepts the spirit of this recommendation but believes that it can best be accommodated within a single organisation with one Chief Executive dealing with both Higher and Further Education. Within that framework, we will establish a Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) with a significant element of common membership with SHEFC.

Recommendation 24 - We recommend to the Government that the proposed funding council for further education should have responsibility for funding all provision leading to qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Recommendation 25 - We recommend to the Government that the proposed funding council for higher education should be responsible for all provision offered by higher education institutions and degree provision wherever it is offered, including degree provision in the further education colleges and, when it comes on stream, the University of the Highlands and Islands Project.

The Government does not accept that the two Funding Councils should have responsibility for funding qualifications rather than institutions. On balance, the Government has decided to retain the existing split of funding responsibilities, on an institutional basis. The new SFEFC will therefore fund all provision within FE colleges, and the existing SHEFC will fund all provision within HE institutions.

The Government believes that this alternative division of funding responsibility will still allow for continual development of collaboration and synergy between FE colleges and HE institutions, without risking mission drift or stimulating inappropriate mergers between institutions in different sectors.

The Government also notes the Committee's comments on the position of the Scottish Agricultural College and will review its funding arrangements.

Recommendation 26 - We recommend to the new Quality Assurance Agency that it should be responsible for assuring the quality of all programmes offered within higher education institutions and all degree-level provision wherever it is delivered.

The Government accepts the principle behind this recommendation, that the division of responsibility for quality assurance should reflect the division of funding responsibilities. Although this recommendation was addressed to the QAA, SHEFC has a statutory duty to assess quality in the higher education institutions it funds. As section 3.2 explains, SHEFC has already entered into discussions with the QAA about development of trials for the new quality assurance system in Scotland. Since the Government has decided (Recommendation 24) that the new FE Funding Council should be responsible for funding all provision in FE colleges, quality assurance arrangements in the FE sector will reflect that remit.

6.5 *Scottish Forum for Higher Education*

Recommendation 27 - We recommend to the Secretary of State for Scotland that a new body - the Scottish Forum for Higher Education - should be established to advise the Secretary of State on the strategic direction of higher education in Scotland.

The Government believes that the strategic direction of higher education in Scotland - and supporting policies - should emerge from a broad and inclusive debate involving all groups with an interest.

While the Government is not convinced of the need to establish a new body it does wish to obtain strategic advice. It has therefore asked SHEFC (which has a statutory role to advise the Secretary of State on higher education matters) to provide advice, from time to time, on the key strategic issues arising for higher education in Scotland and the needs of the Scottish economy, and the implementation of its reforms. In doing so, the Council has been asked to consult widely with those who have an interest in education - particularly the further education sector - and the needs of employers. The Government will also make public the advice provided on these issues.

CHAPTER 7

7. FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

Recommendation 28 - We recommend to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland that it should consider how it might adopt a differential funding methodology for the Access Funds so that resources are better targeted towards those institutions where the students' need is greatest.

The Government recognises and accepts the principle which lies behind this recommendation. However, it has, in the past, proved extremely difficult to identify any firm basis on which it could be implemented equitably. In order to take account of the social profile of the student body at an institution, information would be required on individual students' needs. The Government has asked the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) to consider further this matter in allocating access funds for 1998-99. It also announced recently that access funds would be doubled for that year and that part-time students would become eligible to apply for assistance

Recommendation 29 - We recommend to the Secretary of State for Scotland that, if a graduate contribution is introduced, the Secretary of State should ensure that the contribution from Scottish graduates for qualifications gained in Scotland is equitable with the contribution for comparable qualifications gained elsewhere in the UK.

The Government has announced that it supports this recommendation. It believes that the principle of equity should stem from the fact that Scottish domiciled students by and large have school qualifications geared to entry into Scottish higher education institutions. It therefore intends that SAAS should pay the full tuition fee to institutions in the additional, or Honours, year of Scottish degree courses that are longer than comparable courses elsewhere in the UK. The Government's view is that a significant proportion of students from elsewhere in the UK coming to study in Scotland should be able - as they currently are - to benefit from direct entry into second year by virtue of their A level qualifications where it is appropriate, while many will benefit from the means test which ensures that about 30% of the least well-off students from elsewhere in the UK will pay nothing.

CHAPTER 8

8. WAY FORWARD

The Garrick Committee set out guidance on its priorities for action in terms of indicating the issues which it believes should be tackled immediately. This section sets out the action the Government has planned against each of the Committee's headings.

Funding

The Committee identified a need for primary legislation on its proposals for student financing as a matter of priority. The Government has taken this forward and the Teaching and Higher Education Bill is now in Parliament. The new arrangements for student support should, subject to Parliamentary approval, be in place by academic year 1998-99.

The new student funding changes - in common with all of the funding options set out in the Dearing Committee Report - will only provide some additional funding for higher education in 1998-99. Within the expenditure plans for 1998-99, however, Scottish higher education institutions will benefit from an additional £17 million and the colleges from an additional £8 million. In addition, the Government will fund the new student support arrangements and improve assistance to poorer students by doubling access funds and extending them to part-time students.

Although some students will pay tuition fees direct to institutions, the saving to the Government on state funded tuition fees will largely be offset by higher costs of student support. Part of the Government's proposals are that students should be eligible for higher maintenance loans.

Management and Governance

The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation that institutions need to take urgent action to make sure that they make best possible use of available resources. It looks to SHEFC to consult with institutions about the best way to improve benchmarking by the sector, and to take this forward without delay.

As Chapter 6 confirms the Government has also agreed with the Committee's recommendation to create a Scottish Further Education Funding Council with a target date of April 1999. The Scottish Office will now, and the new Council will in future, consult with FE colleges as indicated above.

Quality and Standards

Officials from The Scottish Office and SHEFC met representatives of the new QAA and the Scottish institutions in December to begin discussions on a new quality assurance regime for Scotland. The QAA intends to begin trials of the new regime in Scotland in 1998-99.

Qualifications

The Government recognises that the sector has considerable work in hand in taking forward the Dearing/Garrick proposals for a qualifications framework. It has asked SHEFC as one of its priorities for 1998-99 to ensure that its funding methodology encourages educationally desirable change, such as a flexible approach to enable learners to join courses at the stage appropriate to their prior qualifications and courses with new exit points.

Admissions

The Scottish Office continues to work with the higher education providers and their representative bodies to improve the interface between school and higher education studies. Higher education representatives are involved at all levels of the Higher Still programme including the Implementation Group and those groups considering the content of individual courses. The Higher Still Higher Education Sector Group provides specific advice to the Implementation Group on issues affecting the sector. Both The Scottish Office and COSHEP will be partners in the Advisory Group on a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

CHAPTER 9

9. THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN 1998-99

The above summary in Chapter 8 of action being taken by the Government demonstrates that it has met fully the Garrick Committee's requests for short-term action. In addition, it has set out 4 priorities for SHEFC for 1998-99 that are not covered by the Committee's recommendations on first steps (set out in detail below). The Government will shortly be writing to SHEFC with additional strategic guidance reflecting the Committee's recommendations and the Government's vision for higher education in Scotland.

Access

Its first priority is widening access to higher education to all sectors of the population. The Dearing Committee concluded that entry to higher education was still predominantly achieved by those in socio-economic groups I, II and III. The Garrick Committee acknowledged that there had been some success in widening participation in higher education to students in groups IV and V although more could be achieved. The Government's proposals to means test tuition fees mean that around 40% of least well-off Scottish students will have all their tuition fees paid by the Government. It does not, therefore, believe this should deter students from less well-off backgrounds from entering higher education.

The Government has also asked SHEFC to consider the increased cost to higher education institutions of pursuing wider access routes and to consider acting as a contributor to fund the wider access schemes that exist in Scotland. SHEFC has also been asked to monitor participation by different areas and groups (including the disabled) in Scotland and to contribute towards a national strategy for widening access.

Institutional Stability

The Government has recognised that the change in student support arrangements may have caused some students to bring forward entry to higher education into 1997 and that uncertainty may delay applications for 1998-99. It has therefore granted SHEFC flexibility in its funding if institutions experience under recruitment against the Council's plans. Similar consideration will be given to the position of FE colleges. It has also, more specifically, asked SHEFC to consider action, where necessary, to preserve the viability of small specialist institutions while having regard for value for money.

Research

The Government has taken forward the Garrick Committee's longer term recommendations on research. It has asked SHEFC to target some of its research development funding towards research groups in those institutions that have had only limited opportunities to create centres of research strength and thereby gain mainstream funding through the Research Assessment Exercise. The Government has also asked the Council to encourage collaboration among institutions by, for example, promoting access by researchers to facilities outside their own institution. The Council has been asked to address, with the higher education sector, any barriers that prevent such co-operation.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Overview

In total, 48 responses to the Department's invitation to comment on the Dearing and Garrick reports were received (listed below). Among these, 25 came from the further and higher education sectors, 2 from student organisations (including a single response covering 5 different students' organisations), 7 from schools and their representative bodies, 4 from the business sector, and 2 from local authorities.

Funding

It was widely accepted that the higher education sector has expanded rapidly in recent years, but that funding had not grown at the same rate. Many respondents referred to a perceived funding crisis in higher education. This consultation exercise focused on the specific recommendation in Dearing, and the Government's preferred option, rather than alternative options like a graduate tax, or increased public expenditure.

There was mixed support for a student contribution to tuition fees. The higher education sector was broadly supportive of the principle, and comments were concentrated on issues such as the size of the fee, the time at which it should be paid and by whom. The higher education sector expressed concerns about the costs of collection of tuition fee contributions. Students' representatives were unanimously opposed to tuition fee contributions. Respondents who commented on the Government's tuition fee proposals urged that all the new income generated should be invested within the further and higher education sectors. Moreover, it should be additional funding, not a substitute for government expenditure.

Many respondents strongly felt that Scottish students on 4-year honours degree courses should not be disadvantaged financially compared to honours students in the rest of the UK.

There was mixed views on the replacement of grant support with loans. There was wide concern that the abolition of grants would inhibit access to universities for those from poorer backgrounds; however, among those who commented, there was support for the new income contingent loan arrangements compared to the old system, particularly from the National Union of Students and UNISON.

Management and Governance

The higher education sector is clearly proud of its autonomy, but respondents also emphasised the need for public money to be seen to be spent wisely and with propriety. There was strong support for a Scottish Further Education Funding Council, but opinion varied over its remit and overlap with SHEFC. There was some support for a combined Tertiary Education Funding Council.

The proposal to remove the link between Rectors and the chairmanship of University Courts was overwhelmingly opposed.

There was broad support for a Scottish Forum for Higher Education, and for a similar body for Further Education. However it was also suggested that there may be no need for such fora if SHEFC's remit was expanded to cover planning and strategy.

Quality and Standards

There was limited comment on quality issues.

The Dearing proposals to create a streamlined and less bureaucratic quality assurance mechanism were broadly supported, against a background of concerns about the burden of any system. Among comments on the proposed new system, the estimated commitment for external examiners of about 60 days was considered wholly unrealistic.

Qualifications

The Scottish honours degree system was universally praised, as has been the case with previous consultation exercises. On balance, there was support for the proposed 3-year Scottish Bachelor degree as an alternative for some students. It was considered important that the decision to pursue this qualification should be taken on academic or vocational grounds, and not based on financial considerations. There was little support for centrally managed encouragement for universities to provide shorter degree courses.

Admissions

There was general support for the Garrick recommendation on better use of school 6th year and the development of links into undergraduate programmes. There was considerable support also for a meaningful, credit-rated curriculum for the Advanced Higher.

Responses Received by The Scottish Office on The Dearing and Garrick Reports

- 1 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)
 - 2 Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC)
 - 3 Association of University Teachers (AUT)
 - 4 Bell College of Technology
 - 5 British Medical Association (Scottish Office) (BMA)
 - 6 Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland
 - 7 Central College of Commerce
 - 8 Church of Scotland: Department of Education
 - 9 Clackmannanshire Council (Education and Community Services)
 - 10 Clydebank College
 - 11 Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP)
 - 12 Confederation of British Industry (CBI Scotland)
 - 13 Conference of Scottish Centrally-Funded Colleges
 - 14 Dr Andrew H Dawson
 - 15 Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
 - 16 Falkirk College of Further and Higher Education
 - 17 Fife College of Further and Higher Education
 - 18 General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC)
 - 19 Headteachers' Association of Scotland (HAS)
 - 20 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
 - 21 JOINT: Students' Assocs. - Aberdeen/Dundee/Edinburgh/Glasgow/St Andrews
 - 22 Moray College
 - 23 National Board for Nursing, Midwifery & Health Visiting for Scotland
 - 24 National Society for Education in Art & Design
 - 25 NUS Scotland
 - 26 Oban High School Board
 - 27 Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (letter to Brian Wilson)
 - 28 Renfrewshire Council
 - 29 Robert Gordon University
 - 30 Royal College of Nursing
 - 31 Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)
 - 32 St Andrew's College
 - 33 Scottish Advisory Committee in Credit and Access (SACCA)
 - 34 Scottish Council Development and Industry (SCDI)
 - 35 Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)
 - 36 Scottish Enterprise (SE)
 - 37 Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
 - 38 Skill (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities)
 - 39 Scottish National Party
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- 40 Scotland's Polytechnic Colleges
- 41 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- 42 ScotCASS
- 43 STEC
- 44 STUC
- 45 Scottish Wider Access Programme - East
- 46 UNISON
- 47 University of the Highlands and Islands Project
- 48 University of Paisley

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